DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 051 494 AC 010 411

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TITLE	Assessment of Functional Illiteracy in Washoe County and a Strategy of Recruitment for the Adult Basic Education Program.
INSTITUTION	Nevada Univ., Reno. Coll. of Education.
PUB DATE	Jan 70
NOTE	37p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Basic Education, *Educational Objectives, *English (Second Language), *Functional Illiteracy, *Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	Nevada, Washoe County

ABSTRACT

This study considers two questions: (1) Who are the functional illiterates in the Reno-Sparks area? and (2) How can they be brought into the adult basic education program if they are not at present enrolled? A survey was made of the area to obtain statistical information concerning the functional illiterates. A compilation of the statistics is presented in tables, as are estimates of the number of functional illiterates. Recommendations are that: (1) publicity of the English Second Language and Adult Basic Education programs be increased; (2) the total target population be reevaluated; (3) both programs be upgraded; and (4) every effort be made to keep the student in the program. (DB)

ED051494

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ASSESSMENT OF FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY IN WASHOE COUNTY AND A STRATEGY OF RECRUITMENT FOR THE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

RECEIVED
MAY 28 1971
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Prepared by

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January 1970

Research and Educational Planning Center
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AC010411

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THE PROBLEM

This study directs itself toward two fundamental problems which face the adult basic education program in Washoe County. The two basic questions which it considers are:

(1) Who are the functional illiterates in the Reno-Sparks area?

(2) How can they be brought into the adult basic education program if they are not at present enrolled?

The assigned task for this study was to contact the various agencies and organizations in the Reno-Sparks area to ascertain the areas in which functional illiterates "surface." As a result of this an estimate of the functional illiteracy in Washoe was to be forth-coming. The community survey was also to include service organizations, businesses, community leaders and individuals working with the A.B.E. program. Recommendations were to be made as a result of the survey on how to increase our enrollment of students in the A.B.E. program.

The program at the present time consists of two divisions, English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) and Adult Basic Education (A.B.E. which is primarily designed for the American born functional illiterate). The English as a Second Language program is divided into three sections, Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. The Adult Basic Education classes are divided into classes for Reading, English, and Mathematics taught on three different levels.

The E.S.L. and A.B.E. program is entirely academic in nature and classes are taught at Reno High School.

THE SURVEY

The following agencies and persons were contacted in this Reno-Sparks survey. Those agencies or persons who supplied definite statistical information regarding the functional illiterate are starred and the information incorporated in the Statistics and Estimate of Functional Illiteracy in Washoe County section of the report.

*Immigration

*Navy, Army, Air Force, Marine Recruitment

*Selective Service
Col. A. Millard
Internal Revenue Service

*Nevada State Dept. Welfare
Meta-Marie Llorigan - Social Case Work Supervisor
Virginia Kinkor - Social Case Work Supervisor-Eligibility

Employment Security
Margaret Chapman - Manpower Training
John Gavin - Placement
George Tavernia - CAMPS
Louis Robinson - Counselor

*Parole and Probation
Ed Olsen - Adult Parole Officer

*Dept. of Motor Vehicles
Arthur Von Ignatius - Asst. Chief of Drivers License Div., Carson City

*Vocational Rehabilitation
William Kelly - Area Admin., Nev. Dept. of Health, Welfare and Rehabilitation

Office of Economic Opportunity
Dolores Feemster - Outreach Center

*University of Nevada
Dr. J. Clark Davis - Dir., Research and Educational Planning Center, College of Education
Dr. Dana Davis - Associate Researcher, Research and Educational Planning Center
Dr. Elmer Ruscoe - Dir. Bureau Government Research
Nevada Bureau of Business and Economic Research
Professor Shih - Fan Chu - College of Business

*Race Relations Center
Ed Scott - Director

*Inter Tribal Council (Reno-Sparks)
Ray Mills - Housing Officer

*Public Health
Marilyn Costa - Dir. Speech and Hearing Clinic,
790 Sutro, Reno

*U.S. Department of Commerce
Jack Howell - Director, Reno Office

Faculty Wives, University of Nevada
Mrs. Jack Shirley - President

Sparks Rotary
Mike Horan - program chairman

*Washoe Assoc. for Retarded Children
Manuel Wedge - Director
Washoe County Ministerial Assoc.
Rev. John Dodson - president

League of Women Voters
Esther Nichelson - president
Nancy Gomes - past president

Church Women United

Westminster Presbyterian Church - Sparks
Committee on Social Concerns

Sertoma
Dave Cadwalader - president of Sparks Sertoma
Bob Rule - District president of Sertoma

Sparks High School
Mike Horan - Principal

Sociedad Honorifica Mexicana
Antonia Guzman - Secretary

Zaspiak Bat
Joe Anxo - president

Italian Benevolent Society
Ray Ferrari
Bell Telephone
Tom Smeltzer - Personnel Relations Supervisor,
Bell of Nevada

City of Reno
Delbert Heidrich - Director Finance and Personnel

Washoe County Commissioner
Joe Coppa

Harrahs Club
Lloyd Dyer - Vice Pres. in Charge of Industrial Relations

Adult Education Personnel
*Jerry Nielsen - State Director Adult Basic Ed.
*Max Johnson - Coordinator Adult Education, Reno High
Advisory Council - Adult Basic Education
Delbert Heidrich
Tom Smeltzer
Joe Coppa
Ray Mills
William Kelly
Meta-Marie Lorrigan

Teachers (E.S.L.)
John Madariaga
Lawrence Deighton
Mary A. Davis

Teachers (A.B.E.)
Jesse Hall
Louis Robinson
Jack Gilbert

*Adult Basic Education Student Questionnaire

Vista
Bonnie Aase; worker in Northeast Reno

IDENTIFICATION OF THE FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATE

The following definition and description will be helpful in specifically determining what is meant by the term "functionally illiterate."

The Bureau of the Census defines a person as being functionally illiterate if he has had less than five years of schooling.

> *The functionally illiterate adult in American society is that individual who does not have the necessary reading skills to make him eligible for vocational training when his marginal job in the labor market is discontinued. An adult who cannot read is most reluctant to acknowledge his deficiency. Often he will go to any length to hide it. Poor eyesight and lack of glasses are often used as excuses to get others to read directions aloud. Great care must be given to identifying this type of individual and much tact is necessary to persuade him to attend a basic reading class. Surveys of the type which are commonly employed to obtain information are useless when used to locate the educationally handicapped.* (Esther Fox--Considerations in Constructing a Basic Reading Program for Functionally Illiterate Adults.)

The functional illiterate in the Reno-Sparks area falls into two distinct categories:

(1) The immigrant who has a foreign language background.

(2) The American-born citizen who has dropped out of school at an early age and consequently lacks adequate reading, writing and math skills.

The Reno-Sparks Immigrant

As of December, 1968, there were 9,000 aliens residing in the State of Nevada. The number of aliens residing in Washoe County was not obtainable. A reasonable estimate of the number residing in Washoe County in 1969 is 3,000.

Washoe County is an area which attracts quite a wide variety of immigrants. At present, Spanish speaking immigrants

are the most prevalent; these include Mexicans, Basques, Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Spaniards. A fairly large number of Orientals are coming into the county. Among these are Korean brides of American G.I.s. The remainder come from all over the world--India, Sweden, Russia, Greece, The Phillipine Islands, etc. The only definitely observable geographic concentration of these immigrants is the concentration of the Mexican population in the Sparks area. Generally speaking, however, Sparks has been favored by the Italian immigrant and still attracts many of our new immigrants.

The immigrant arrives into the area and generally finds many of his nationality who have preceded him. Employment is usually not a serious problem since the immigrant has contacts among his own people which assure his sustenance and independence. Mrs. Kinkor at the Welfare Office verifies that the Washoe County immigrant very rarely ends up on the welfare rolls. He realizes the need to learn English and is quite likely to take advantage of the E.S.L. Program <u>if he is aware of the existance of the program and receives some moral support in getting into the program</u>.

<u>The American-Born Functional Illiterate</u>

The Washoe County functional illiterate may be white, Indian or Negro. In general, he has probably dropped out of school at the fifth grade or earlier. He may have pursued his education beyond the fifth grade, receiving social promotions. (It has been found that nationally 30% of our American high school graduates read at or below the fourth grade level.)

Negro. The Negro population of Washoe is estimated to be approximately 4,000 persons. A recent survey by the Research and Educational Planning Center of the College of Education, University of Nevada and the Race Relations Center surveyed 1,354 members of our black community regarding educational background and job opportunities. This black community lives within a definite section of Reno bounded on the west by Virginia Street, on the north by Wedekind Road, on the east by the Sparks city limits, and on the south by East Fourth Street. Very few blacks live in the Sparks area.

According to the statistics in the study, it was found that approximately 11 percent of the black adults surveyed were functionally illiterate--having less than a fifth grade education. One of the questions asked of the interviewed blacks was whether he or she was interested in an adult basic education class. Many replied in the affirmative and the names and addresses of these 172 persons were given to Mr. Max Johnson of the Adult Division of Washoe County Schools in December 1969 in order that these people might be contacted and given an opportunity to enroll.

Indian. Approximately 1,220 Indians live in the Reno-Sparks area of Washoe County. Of this number, 525 live in the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, 695 live in private residences scattered around the Reno-Sparks community. These figures are taken from the 1969 Indian report which was also compiled by the Research and Educational Planning Center of the College of Education, University of Nevada. This report also

estimates that approximately 402 Indians live in the vicinity of Pyramid Lake. A Public Health survey was taken in 1969 of the Indian Colony residents. From the educational statistics given in the Public Health report, 16 percent of the adult Indians residing in the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony have less than a fifth grade education.

Other. The non-Indian and non-Black Reno-Sparks functional illiterate is virtually impossible to identify due to lack of statistics. However, since the white illiterate faces none of the racial handicaps faced by the Negro or Indian during his childhood schooling, it appears likely that physical handicaps such as those described in the following research may apply more directly to him than to his black or non-Indian brother.

> *It appears that the percent of adults in literacy programs in the U.S. who are illiterate just because of educational deficiency, uncomplicated by physical as well as emotional, intellectual and sociological factors, may be quite small. In one adult program 26 enrollees were screened for visual and hearing impairment significant enough to interfere with their learning to read. Seventeen of the 26 were found to have significant visual acuity problems; 15 had significant hearing losses in one or both ears, and only three passed both screenings.* (Richard Burnett, Basic Literacy Projects for Adults; A Reading Specialist's Comments)

Attributes of Persons Living in Culture of Poverty

The Reno-Sparks American-born functional illiterate is more likely than not to live at or near the poverty level. These people possess certain characteristics which are explained in the following description of the attributes of most people living in the culture of poverty. (Edward J.

Casavantes--Adapted from Cohen, Albert K. and Hodges, Harold M., "Characteristics of the Lower-Blue-Collar Class")

1. *Their life within the context of an extended family incorporates a larger proportion of available time than is true of the middle or upper middle class.*

2. *They are non-joiners of voluntary associations, including fraternal, church-related and political associations.*

3. *They have a preference for the old and the familiar, demonstrated by a reluctance to engage in new situations, or to form new social relationships, especially to initiate interactions with strangers.*

4. *They demonstrate a marked anti-intellectualism, which expresses itself in little admiration for intellectuals, professors, writers, artists, the ballet, symphonies, etc. as well as in lack of support for schools or for the school activities of their own children.*

5. *Males demonstrate "Machismo." This is seen as an opposite behavior to being intellectual.*

6. *They tend to live on a day-to-day basis and few provisions are made for long-range activities.*

7. *They are extremely fatalistic in their view of the world, feeling that they have very little control over nature, over institutions, or over events.*

The importance of these characteristics cannot be underestimated since they have a direct bearing on all attempts made to recruit these people into an adult basic education program.

STATISTICS

ESTIMATE OF FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY

The following is a compilation of the statistics gathered in the course of the community survey. From these data an estimation of the number of functional illiterates (adults having less than a 5th grade education) has been made for the Reno-Sparks area.

STATE POPULATION ESTIMATES

YEAR	ESTIMATE
1968	495,266
1969	517,553
1975	673,989
1980	781,338

Nevada Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Nevada

WASHOE COUNTY POPULATION ESTIMATES

YEAR	ESTIMATE
1968	125,500
1969	131,000
1975	175,280
1980	204,488

Nevada Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Nevada

ESTIMATE OF POPULATION OF STATE OF NEVADA BY GROUP
1968

AGE	PERCENT OF ESTIMATE
Under 5	11.7%
5-17	26.6%
18-64	55.6%
65 and over	6.1%

Bureau of Census - U.S. Department of Commerce

Immigration

There were 9,000 aliens in the state of Nevada in December, 1968.

Marine Recruitment - Washoe

Reports 2% failure to pass Armed Forces Qualifying Test (A.F.Q.T.)

Army Recruitment - Washoe

Reports 6% failure to pass A.F.Q.T.

Navy and Air Corp -

No available statistics

Selective Service

Northern Nevada
1968 - rejection A.F.Q.T. ---------- 1.8%
N.E. Nevada
1968 - rejection A.F.Q.T. ---------- .5%
Southern Nevada
1968 - rejection A.F.Q.T. ---------- 9.6%
Washoe County
Oct. 1968 to Aug. 1969 rejection ---------- 1.0%

Note - The A.F.Q.T. criteria for acceptance has been lowered recently. The armed forces are now accepting 20-25 percent of all enlistees with percentile scores of 10-20 on the A.F.Q.T. This means that the Armed Forces are now involved in a massive Adult Basic Education Program which provides literacy training for many young men and women who were previously rejected as functionally illiterate.

Drivers License Bureau

Reports less than 1% of Washoe County applicants take the examination for a driver's license orally. The percentage is higher in Las Vegas and in areas of Nevada such as Elko, where many immigrants locate.

Internal Revenue

Reports that they do not have the time or personnel to offer personal assistance to the functional illiterate. He must get help somewhere else.

Welfare - Nov. 26, 1969

Reports 1,197 individual cases on welfare (most of these are old age assistance 65 years or older)

Reports 637 persons on Aid To Dependent Children (A.D.C.). These must be one parent households in order to qualify for aid. Mrs. Kinkor estimates that approximately 10% of these A.D.C. recipients have limited educational backgrounds and would definitely benefit from further basic education. This is not a static group; there is

virtually a 100% turnover yearly. Transportation and baby sitting services would be crucial for these people.

Parole and Probation (Adult)

Of a total case load of 233 persons in the Reno-Sparks area, Nov., 1969, four are barely able to write their names and four others have very limited literacy skills. This is 3.4%.

University of Nevada, College of Education, Department of Research

Study of Washoe County Negroe - 1969

Total Black Population	4,000
Number surveyed	1,354
Adults over 18 years	325
8th grade education or less	44
Less than 5th grade education	38
Percent of Adults less than 5th grade	11%

Study of Washoe County Indian - 1969

Total Indian Population	1,622
Reno-Sparks Indian Colony	525
Private Residence	695
Pyramid Lake Residence	402

Public Health Survey, 1969, Reno-Sparks Indian Colony

Adults surveyed over 18	169
8th grade education or less	33
Less than 5th grade (estimate)	27
Percent of Adults less than 5th grade	16%

Washoe County Assoc. for Retarded Children

Reports that 3% of our population is mentally retarded.

Estimate of Functional Illiterates in Washoe County

According to the statistics listed, a total of 80,827 adults above 18 years of age were living in Washoe

County in 1969. The definition of the Census Bureau for functional illiterate--having less than 5 years of education--is the criterion used in making the following estimates.

Foreign Born

The only statistics available here are those of the Immigration Department which lists 9,000 aliens living in Nevada in Dec. 1968. A reasonable estimate for the year 1969 would place 3,000 aliens in Washoe County. Of these probably about 1,850 are adults. There is no way of knowing how many of these aliens are functionally illiterate in their use of the English language. Beyond these 1,850 adult immigrants, listed as aliens, there are many others who, despite having become American citizens, are below the 5th grade level in English reading and writing skills. This is particularly true of the older immigrant family where the father became an American citizen eventually out of necessity but the wife in her role as mother and housekeeper often did not. A very conservative estimate places 2,000 Washoe County adult immigrants in the functionally illiterate category.

American Born

After eliminating from the total adult population of Washoe County the mentally retarded and the aliens, a conservative estimate places approximately 1% of the total adult American-born, non-retarded population of Washoe in the functionally illiterate (less than 5th grade) category.

This means that approximately 800 American-born Washoe County adults are functionally illiterate.

This number does not include the very nebulous category of persons who have progressed beyond the 5th grade and may even, in some cases, have high school diplomas, who still are reading on a 4th grade level or below. This category of Americans should be classified as educationally handicapped. They are not functionally illiterate in the strict sense of the term as we have employed it for purposes of this estimate.

RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARD IMPROVED RECRUITMENT

The following recommendations are not listed in order of importance but rather in the most convenient sequential order. These recommendations incorporate the suggestions of the many persons interviewed.

I. INCREASE PUBLICITY OF THE E.S.L. AND A.B.E. PROGRAMS

The Bulletin

At present a bulletin goes twice a year into the home of each resident in the Reno-Sparks area, giving information about the total adult program. Despite this mailing, most of the persons interviewed were not aware of the existance of the E.S.L. and A.B.E. Programs. This reaction was the rule rather than the exception as community leaders in various walks of life were interviewed.

A separate section of the bulletin should be devoted to an imaginative and eye-catching explanation of the A.B.E. classes. Pictures of the teaching staff might be helpful.

Another section should be devoted to an explanation of the E.S.L. Program and written in several languages besides English; the languages used to be dictated by the most numerous language groups immigrating to Washoe.

A Personal Letter for the Immigrant

The Immigration Department provides the state A.B.E. office with the names of immigrants coming into the Reno-Sparks area. These adults should definitely be sent a personal letter, written preferably in their own language. If

a letter in their own language presents too much of an obstacle, then a letter in English could be sent since the letter will be translated by someone. This type of personal contact would also solve some of the E.S.L. communication gaps. Beginning and closing dates for classes could be stated and beginning E.S.L. students could be kept from coming to register long after a class had started and the material "over their heads." At present the beginning E.S.L. student is registered whenever he comes into the office simply because the office personnel do not wish to offend or reject him and are of course not able to communicate with him. This middle-of-the-year-beginning E.S.L. student often ends up dropping out simply because of this lack of communication.

News Media

Surveys of Adult Basic Education programs in the U.S. indicate newspapers to be of little value in recruiting A.B.E. and E.S.L. students. Radio has generally not been found very helpful. However, many programs report good results from a strategically timed, well planned T.V. spot. A brief classroom presentation might be effective for A.B.E. publicity. A foreign language communication would be excellent for the E.S.L.

Agencies

Improve and continue cooperation with agencies which do make or may make referrals to the Basic Education Program.

The A.B.E. student questionnaire which was given in December, 1969 disappeared before reaching me. Another

questionnaire was filled out by A.B.E. students enrolled for the second semester January, 1970. Of interest here are the answers which the students gave to the question "How did you learn about the Adult Basic Education classes?" One-third of the second semester enrollment had learned of the classes from the bulletin mailed to their home. Another one-third had learned about the class by word of mouth from another student or friend. The remaining one-third had been referred by the Veteran's Administration, Employment Office, employer and employment counselor. One gentleman was referred to the classes by his analyst. The newspaper was credited by several people.

Agencies not reported in the student questionnaire are Office of Economic Opportunity, Welfare, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Here again we are faced by the fact that many agencies are concerned with getting a person hired and find it difficult to interest the disadvantaged person in an academically oriented A.B.E. Program where he can see no immediate employment resulting from enrollment in the classes.

Vista Workers

The Vista worker is primarily concerned with the young but naturally comes in contact with the adults of her area of assignment. Bonnie Aase, Vista worker in Northeast Reno feels that it would be quite natural to contact and interest adults in an A.B.E. class if it appeared they would profit from the instruction. Here again the problem would be to convince the disadvantaged adult that the class would have some immediate

reward for him. Miss Aase was very interested in this possibility. On the basis of this enthusiastic interview, I would recommend that this avenue for recruitment be pursued to greater lengths. The Vista worker might also prove helpful for child care service and also serve as transportation aids for those who are interested in the classes but are unable to get to Reno High.

Business

The largest employer in the Reno-Sparks area is the gambling-hotel industry. These employers hire many functional illiterates and many immigrants. This is verifiable by the jobs which the E.S.L. students list on their registration. Very often they are hired as maids, maintenance men, janitors, and kitchen help. However, the personnel man in charge of the hiring for the large gambling hotel complex either is unaware that these people work for his establishment or refuses to acknowledge that these people work there. The City of Reno hires none of these. Bell Telephone says that they hire none. Employment Security cannot name a business which hires these people.

In short it appears that a public awareness campaign concerning the functional illiterate, both American born and foreign born, is far, far overdue. An awareness of the existence of these persons and their problem must be created in the business and civic areas of our community.

Foreign Extraction Clubs and Leaders

There have been many social groups or clubs established in Reno-Sparks composed of different nationalities. Some of these appear to be strictly social but it is hoped that some might have an interest in being helpful to others of their ethnic background. This area of our community could be extremely helpful in getting the immigrant to the E.S.L. class and also providing assistance with problems such as transportation. The following groups were contacted by this survey and asked to contact Mr. Johnson if the club were interested in undertaking this type of project.

Sociedad Honorifica Mexicana
Zaspiak Bat
Italian Benevolent Society

The following groups were recommended to me but not contacted. There are undoubtedly many others. A contact for the Orientals is needed.

Sons of Italy
Sisters of Philip Neri--Holy Cross Church, Reno
(Interested in Cubans)
Guadalupe Society (Mexicans) Father McGrath, Immaculate Conception Church, Sparks

II. RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT, DESPITE INCREASED PUBLICITY, MANY FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATES WILL NOT COME INTO THE PRESENT ACADEMICALLY ORIENTED PROGRAM.

Attitudes of the Disadvantaged Adult

The attitudes of most people living in the culture of poverty have been set forth in the description of the Washoe County functional illiterate on page six of this report. Especially noteworthy here are the attitudes toward education: (1) They demonstrate a marked anti-intellectualism; (2) They

make few provisions for long-range activities--living on a day-to-day basis; and (3) They are extremely fatalistic, feeling that they have little control over nature, institutions or over events.

Learning Characteristics of the Disadvantaged Adult

Experience with "marginal" men in the Armed Forces and in the Job Training Centers has shown that teaching literacy skills is best accomplished using materials directly related to the job the person will be performing. Reading for the sake of reading is largely ineffective. The disadvantaged person requires a direct application for what he learns; in short these skills must be functional.

It is also important to realize that the reinforcements for which the adult works, especially the disadvantaged adult, are different than for a child. These people generally have had a history of poor performance in school and have reduced the anxiety accompanying school attendance by droping out. Thus, avoidance of school is a positively reinforcing behavior. To counter this, the disadvantaged student will consider only a program which shows some immediate payoff--by being able to apply what he learns to job performance which in turn leads to employment and change in social and economic status.

Experiences with disadvantaged adults in both Armed Forces and Job Corp indicate that considerable social reinforcement must be provided. These people are ashamed of the fact that they are illiterate or functionally illiterate.

Much encouragement is necessary to make these people (1) acknowledge their condition and then (2) try to change it.

These research results have been confirmed by this survey. Those persons dealing with disadvantaged adults report that they are generally unable to interest persons in a general academic A.B.E. program where he will be studying reading for the sake of reading, and mathematics for the sake of mathematics. The hard core disadvantaged must see some immediate reward which means employment, higher paying employment or change of social and economic status.

III. RE-EVALUATE THE TOTAL TARGET POPULATION

The Disadvantaged of the Future

A recent study of the drop-out in Washoe County Schools revealed evidence that numbers of our young people are dropping out of school long before graduation. These are the functionally illiterate or disadvantaged adults of tomorrow.

Some arrangement could be worked out in Washoe County to get some of these students into the A.B.E. program which offers a low-pressure, non-competitive, work at your own level, individualized approach in the subject areas of reading, language and mathematics.

IV. UP-GRADE THE E.S.L. AND A.B.E. PROGRAMS

Teacher Training

The unamious opinion of administrators of A.B.E. programs, represented at an E.S.L. oriented institute held in Albuquerque,

New Mexico, was that the average teacher, trained to teach children, is a "flop" when she attempts to teach an A.B.E. class or an E.S.L. class. What this means is that techniques and procedures of the regular classroom for children are not generally conducive to success in the A.B.E. and E.S.L. Programs. Despite the fact that education of disadvantaged adults is a relatively new field, there is much that has been learned about learning attitudes and abilities of adults as well as teaching methods that have proved successful.

A workshop which need not last for more than a few hours, if well planned, should be held at least once a year and preferably twice a year previous to the start of each semester. These should be practical and allow for maximum participation of those teaching in the program so that a free flow of ideas can result. We are learning as we go along and can learn from each other. New teachers coming into the program should have the benefits of this type of exposure and an opportunity to plan a short lesson to be taught and video taped. Everyone who participates in this type of experience learns something valuable which should make him a more effective teacher in the adult classroom.

Materials

The classic cliche among educators in A.B.E. and E.S.L. seems to be that a good teacher can teach with anything at hand. If there is no relevant material to teach with--make your own, they will tell you. It is amazing what you can teach E.S.L. class with nothing more than a telephone directory--

seems to be a popular administrative concept. The truth of the matter is that a well planned literacy program does not just materialize out of thin air with every teacher in the program doing his own "thing".

Experts agree that the bulk of the E.S.L. and A.B.E. materials sold on the market today are really children's materials rewritten, and much of this material is not effective for adult instruction. However, every effort must be made to have some reasonably good material on hand for each new teacher to start with. Secondly there should be a room where a sampling of new E.S.L. materials, especially, are available for perusal. The presentation of new materials and guidance along this line would be effectively done along with the workshop for teachers previously recommended.

A last factor concerning materials which should be emphasized is that every effort should be made to order the material which the teacher requires so that the material is on hand when the first class session starts.

Pupil Placement and Testing

The hard core functional illiterate or the younger school drop-out has failed in the public school set-up. He has real problems which the public schools probably did not diagnose. The same problems, if not recognized when the student comes into the A.B.E. Program will cause him to fail again. A good comprehensive testing program is a must if the disadvantaged is to succeed the second time around.

Placement and testing are rather difficult for the E.S.L. Program due to the language barrier. Here it is important to get the person into the right class the first time. These immigrants often feel that if the teacher decides they are in a class "over their heads" and moves them to a lower level class that they have "lost face" so to speak and often never return again. Some simple criteria should be devised to test whether the immigrant speaks, reads and writes on any level in English. Even though he may be able to speak, the fact that he can not read or write the language should dictate that he be placed in a beginning class where reading, writing and speaking are taught as a total process. Placement in an intermediate class should be determined by the student's ability to read, write and speak a little English.

Recognition of Physical Handicaps

There is evidence which suggests that many functional illiterates are unable to read due to visual and/or hearing problems. The study previously cited on page six under description of the functional illiterate found that of a class of 26 potential A.B.E. students, 23 were found, upon screening, to have hearing or visual defects serious enough to impede their learning to read.

Consideration should be given to a visual and hearing screening, as well as placement testing, of A.B.E. students who have reading difficulty. The testing and guidance person could very easily give the visual testing needed to identify those students with serious visual problems. There are special

tests which are used to determine "tracking" ability, etc. which are essential if reading success is to be achieved. These tests are relatively simple to give.

The testing for audio difficulties would have to be done by a trained person having the proper equipment. This service is performed by Marilyn Costa, director of the Speech and Hearing Clinic, 790 Sutro Street, Reno. However, the Clinic does not have a portable audiometer and the student would have to make an appointment during the day to be tested. This could be coordinated by A.B.E. guidance personnel.

V. MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE E.S.L. AND A.B.E. STUDENT IN THE PROGRAM.

The necessity for relevant program and materials as well as carefully chosen and trained teachers has already been discussed. However, there are areas beyond program which make a difference between a student remaining in a class or dropping out.

Long Term Goal

There is substantial evidence from analysis of class attendance records for both E.S.L. and A.B.E. which indicates that something about the present programs is conducive to a very short attendance span in both programs. Needless to say, literacy skills are not learned overnight; the student who stays in the class for a full semester learns much but still has far to go. Consider the achievement level of the average student enrolled in 1968-69.

Both programs showed little continuity from semester to semester insofar as enrollment repetition was concerned. Twenty percent repetition in enrollment seems to be the highest and some classes showed virtually no repetition from semester to semester. In both programs over half of the students enrolled were present for substantially less than half the class sessions.

Perhaps the same psychology could be applied to the E.S.L. and A.B.E. Programs which was applied to the foreign language classes several years ago. A class of 20 students in the fall would deteriorate to a class of less than ten by January when the new semester started. Consequently no second semester class was held due to less than 10 registration. Then the classes were changed to year classes; the resulting improvement in student retention has been little short of amazing. On the average, approximately 50 % of the class has been in attendance at the end of the year, since the long term goal was instituted.

Child Care

A number of E.S.L. parents have been bringing their children to class. Obviously, this baby sitting service cannot be advertised since no teacher can be expected to cope with a horde of children in her class room. However, many potential students, especially A.D.C. parents who are heads of one-parent households are not going to be able to attend class without some child-care assistance. Husband and wife combinations who both badly need instruction in English

cannot both attend if younger children are in the household.

I feel that this child-care service could be incorporated into the program with very little extra trouble and expense. One classroom supervised by a teacher aide could be set aside for the children in the general area where the adult classes are offered. Older youngsters could sit with their parents if they care to help them. Vista workers already assist with child care for A.D.C. meetings and might help here. There are other possibilities such as Future Teachers on the high school level.

Transportation

Transportation assumes added significance in the Reno-Sparks area because of the absence of public transportation. The situation in this respect seems unlikely to change in the near future.

A recent survey of 3,163 A.B.E. students in Arizona, conducted by the Arizona Research Coordinating Unit, shows that transportation was the largest single reason listed for dropping out of the program--34.5%. The next largest item listed for dropout was lack of interest--20.2%.

I know from experience that many E.S.L. students have serious transportation problems. I discovered to my dismay last winter that a Haitian student was walking miles in the dark because her employer did not want her to learn English (she had been hired to teach the children French) and refused to transport her to class. Another student, a Filipino

bride of an American G.I., had a husband who refused to transport her to class whenever he became resentful about something. She arrived at class having walked from one end of the city, without supper, on many occasions so exhausted she could barely concentrate. To expect students to remain in the program under such circumstances is ridiculous. The simple fact is, that if we are serious in our effort to reach our target population, we must provide some transportation assistance for those who need it.

Class Location

The consensus of all materials and research on the subject of class location for Adult Basic Education is that the classes should be held in the neighborhood from which the bulk of the class is recruited. Also psychological evidence is projected to the effect that an adult who failed in school does not want to go back into the environment in which he failed.

Persons interviewed in this survey felt that classes should be held in the neighborhood rather than in one central location further away. The Sparks High School principal was quite emphatic in his belief that classes should be held at Sparks High on all levels of Adult Education. Indian and Negro representatives felt that success in recruiting people from their areas would be improved if the class were held in the general neighborhood. Mr. Mills of the Inter-Tribal Council would like to see the Baptist property across the street from the Council building used for classes which utilize some current interest in the Indian Colony as a motivating force. At present a new housing program could be used to build

a curriculum around home ownership problems, home maintenance helps, refinishing furniture and a host of related subject areas. A number of persons interviewed did not understand why the A.B.E. class was moved from Traner. Serious consideration was offered toward use of the facilities of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Sparks, on Rock Boulevard for use as A.B.E. classrooms or E.S.L. classrooms.

However, despite the overwhelming research and community support for community classes, several other factors should be considered.

(1) Regardless of where the class is held, the student cannot be expected to walk to it at night. Near or somewhat further, he is going to require private transportation.

(2) E.S.L. classes may lend themselves equally effective taught both on the community and centralized level, but academically oriented A.B.E. classes would lose many of the advantages to be derived from centralization--counseling services, placement testing and classes graded according to differing levels of ability which are taught by experts on each subject area.

(3) If moving the class to a neighborhood area would insure many additional A.B.E. students, a recommendation to this effect might be justifiable. However, all the evidence gathered from this community survey points out emphatically that the hard core functional illiterate in Reno-Sparks is not likely to enroll in the present academically oriented classes even if they were offered in his community area.

SUMMARY

E.S.L. Program

The E.S.L. program shows great promise. With increased publicity and some offer of assistance for those unable to transport themselves and child care for those who require it, this program could mushroom and provide a marvelous public service to the Reno-Sparks community. Great strides are being made in acquiring good materials and ironing out placement problems. Teacher selection in this area has been excellent and the teacher training mini-institute held in Las Vegas in Jan. 1970 was helpful, though controversial in the extensive minority propaganda which the Southwest Lab people focused upon. I predict that a study of the pupil retention from semester to semester this 1969-70 year will show a great improvement over the 1968-69 year.

A.B.E. Program

The A.B.E. program which is strictly academic in nature is going to stay in constant hot water unless a new target population can be found to benefit from it. The teachers are excellent but even when armed with the best of academic materials, these classes will not draw the average American-born functional illiterate. The reasons for this have previously been stated in Recommendation II. Many programs nationwide have revised their programs toward definite vocational objectives and report increased recruitment.

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JUL 27 1971
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